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THE BOLLES COLLECTION

THE GIFT OF MRS. RUSSELL SAGE

A BRIEF notice of Mrs. Russell Sage's gift of the H. Eugene Bolles Collection of English and American furniture was made in the last issue of the BULLETIN, but so important a benefaction demands a more extended report than it was possible to make then, not only because of its great intrinsic value, but also because of its significance in the history of our American art, and the conservation of it.

Some idea of the scope of the collection may be gained from the following facts, which must necessarily be summary in their character.

Mr. Bolles, who is a lawyer of Boston, made his collection during a period of twenty years beginning at a time when the evidences of the early craftsmanship in this country were prized by the few who had them as inheritances from their ancestors, but when they were almost unknown by the community at large. This was the hey-day for the collector. Dr. Irving P. Lyon, a pioneer in the field, infected with the charm of the old furniture found in and about his native town, Hartford, published in 1891, as a result of his observation and collecting a work entitled *Colonial Furniture of New England*, which remains to-day a classic of its kind. Of Dr. Lyon's collection numerous pieces have, with the progress of time, come into Mr. Bolles's hands. Albert Hosmer, a well-known cabinetmaker of Hartford, who, like Dr. Lyon, had made a thorough study of his subject, formed a collection of seventeenth-century furniture found chiefly in the Connecticut Valley, so rich in remains of Colonial times, which eventually came complete into the present collection.

Thus early in the field, Mr. Bolles was enabled to choose his examples, and not (as is the case with later collectors) merely take what he could get, and it is due to this fact primarily that his assemblage surpasses in its size, types, and variations of types anything that could be brought together now.

The collection is richest in examples of the works of the seventeenth century, the objects brought from England by the early settlers and the evidence of their own first endeavors at craftsmanship. The oak chest with hinged lid and carved or paneled front shows the style of ornament common to such pieces of furniture in Elizabeth's time and in the preceding period—the "linen fold" pattern, the guilloche, the simpler geometric designs and conventionalized flower forms—as do its American variations. The chest's successor in the last part of the seventeenth century, the chest with drawers, is here illustrated in complete development of one, two, and three drawers, including the so-called "Connecticut" type and the stained, flat-carved "Hadley" chest. The step between the chest *with* drawers and the chest *of* drawers, which became the bureau, is illustrated by several good examples having the prized variations in paneled front and bun feet.

Of "Bible boxes," the small relation of the chest, repositories for the safeguarding of the family Bible or other valuables, there are in the collection no less than twelve examples exhibiting all of the variations of ornaments, geometrical—more Scandinavian than English—Elizabethan, naturalistic, and painted.

No article is more valuable in the study of furniture than the chair, and here the Bolles collection is peculiarly rich. Of seventeenth-century types, there are four fine examples of the rare spindle chair (known to all through the famous examples at Harvard University, called "The President's Chair"), and several of the more commonly used "turned" and "wainscot" chairs.

Early cupboards are well represented by a good example of the rare form known as the "Livery Cupboard," and by all the variations of the "Court Cupboard," most interesting of forms and, perhaps, in the hands of the early American cabinet-maker, the most attractive of our early furniture.

Visitors to the Hudson-Fulton Exhibition will remember a venerable board supported by trestles, which, while lacking exterior polish, possessed no little archi-

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NUMBER I



LACQUERED CABRIOLE-LEGGED HIGH CHEST OF DRAWERS
MIDDLE OF EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

EXAMPLES OF FURNITURE
FROM THE
BOLLES COLLECTION
THE GIFT
OF
MRS. RUSSELL SAGE



CARVED OAK CHEST AND BIBLE BOXES
MIDDLE OF SEVENTEENTH CENTURY



CARVED AND STAINED OAK CHEST
MIDDLE OF SEVENTEENTH CENTURY



CARVED AND PANELED CHEST
LAST QUARTER OF SEVENTEENTH CENTURY



CARVED AND STAINED OAK CHEST WITH ONE DRAWER
LAST QUARTER OF SEVENTEENTH CENTURY



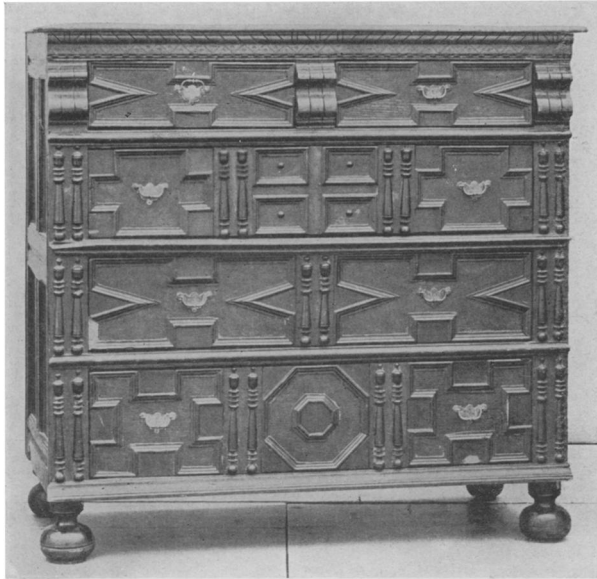
CARVED AND PANELED OAK CHEST WITH TWO DRAWERS
LAST QUARTER OF SEVENTEENTH CENTURY



CARVED AND STAINED CHEST OF DRAWERS
EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURY



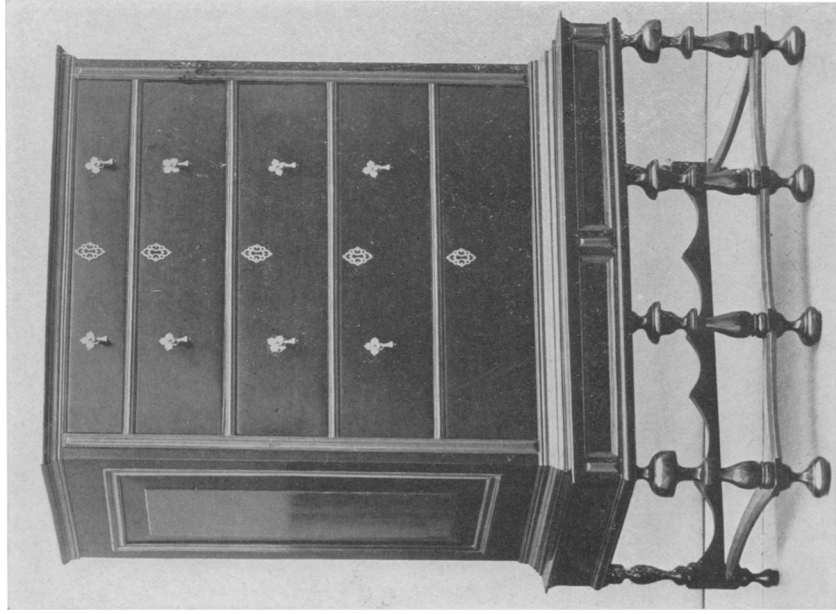
CARVED CHEST OF DRAWERS
LAST QUARTER OF SEVENTEENTH CENTURY



PANELED CHEST OF DRAWERS
LAST QUARTER OF SEVENTEENTH CENTURY



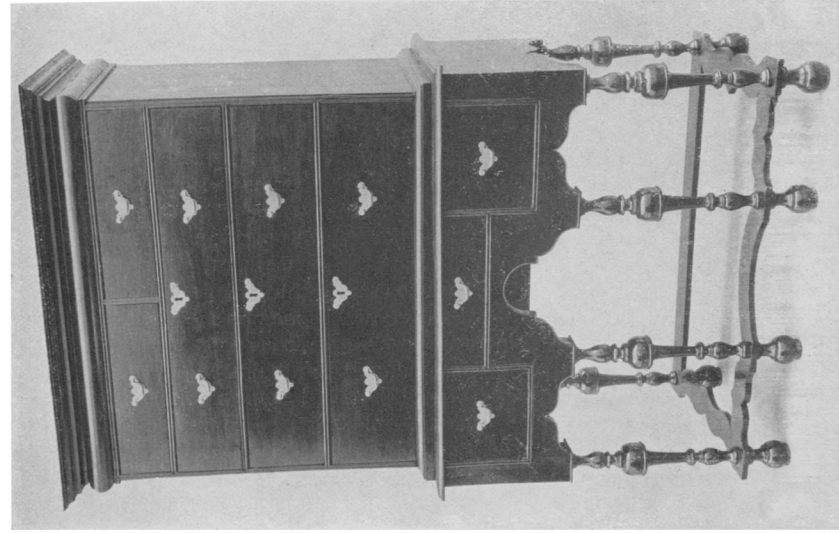
BLOCK-FRONT CHEST OF DRAWERS
LAST QUARTER OF EIGHTEENTH CENTURY



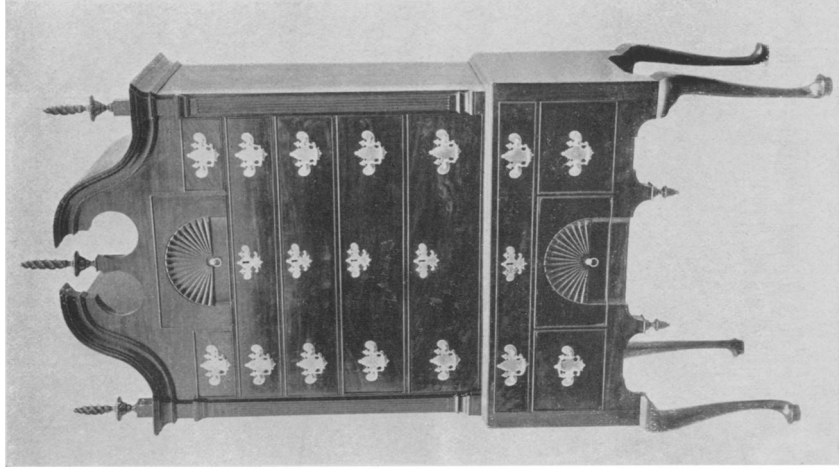
CHEST OF DRAWERS
LAST QUARTER OF SEVENTEENTH CENTURY



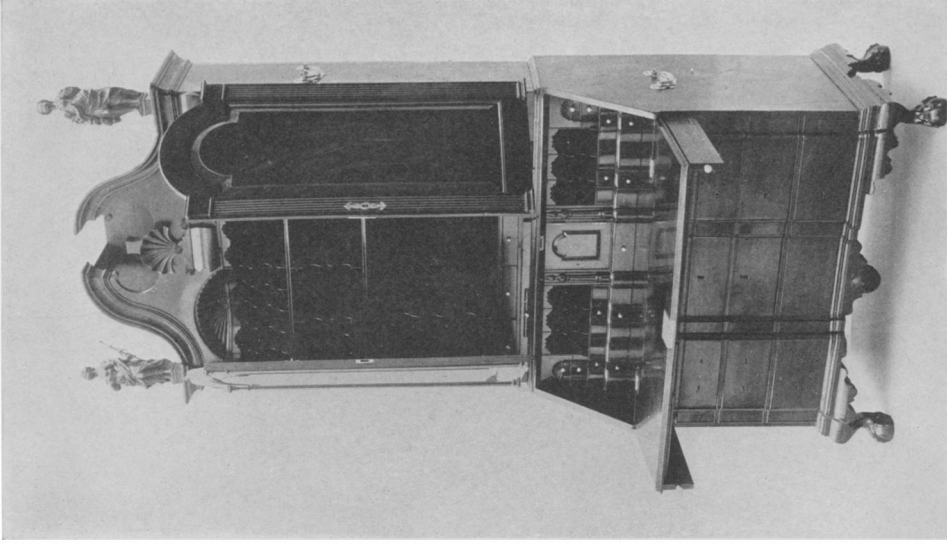
HIGH CHEST OF DRAWERS
LAST QUARTER OF SEVENTEENTH CENTURY



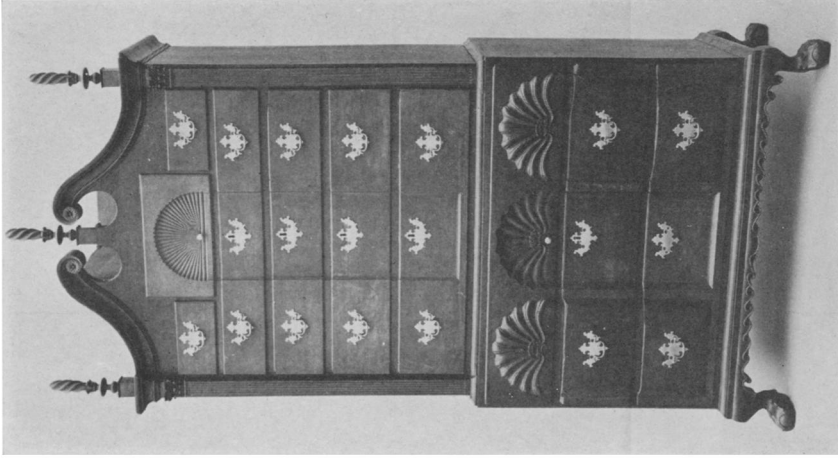
HIGH CHEST OF DRAWERS
LAST QUARTER OF SEVENTEENTH CENTURY



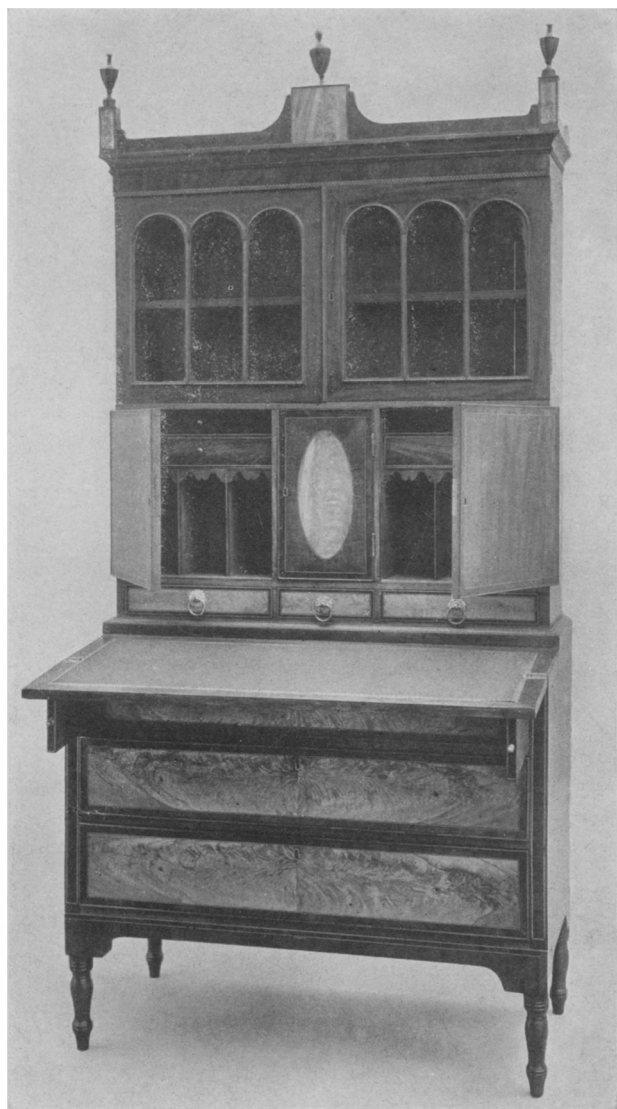
SCROLL-TOP HIGH CHEST OF DRAWERS
MIDDLE OF EIGHTEENTH CENTURY



BLOCK-FRONT, CABINET-TOP SCRUTOIR
LAST QUARTER OF EIGHTEENTH CENTURY



DOUBLE CHEST OF DRAWERS WITH BLOCK
FRONT. ABOUT 1780



SCRUTOIR WITH BOOKCASE TOP. ABOUT 1800

tectural and structural distinction. This, the earliest known American form of table, was a local copy of the "table-board," the earliest form of table used in England. The Bolles Collection exhibits every variety of this piece of necessary household furniture—among them, in the seventeenth century, the long, carved, framed, and joined tables of oak, the "tip-chair table," the "butterfly" variety of the last part of the era and the rare "slate-top" table.

Probably no examples of the different periods of our furniture are so attractive to collectors as those of the first part of the eighteenth century, when the Dutch influence began to make itself felt and graceful and elegant shapes displaced the older rectangular forms. To this period belong the walnut chest of drawers on a frame, usually called a "high-boy," with its attendant dressing table or "low-boy." These may be found in our collection in all their variations, with four, five, and six legs, with waved, straight, cross or X-shaped stretchers, with their various moldings, described at length by F. S. Robinson in his *English Furniture* and their several top finishes.

The walnut, cane-back chair of the period with all its variations of feet, top, and stretchers, and the later American development of this form, the "banister" and "slat backs" are here in every detail. The table, too, with its many twisted and turned legs, is thoroughly well represented.

Coming to the period of the cabriole leg, when furniture was chiefly made of mahogany, which may be considered as a new wood so far as its use in cabinetmaking was concerned, the collection will be found to be rich in examples of every kind of furniture employing this form—chests of drawers, desks, tables, and chairs. These include the early pieces where the leg ends in the so-called "Dutch" foot, through the development of the "cabinetmakers," and called by the name of the greatest of them, Thomas Chippendale. Several excellent examples of the highly prized "block-front" furniture, as well as all the other variations developed by our makers and described as "serpentine," "swell," and "kettle" fronts, are found in this section.

The end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, the period of Hepplewhite and Sheraton in England, saw the production of a quantity of inlaid furniture closely modeled on the English types but possessing a strong individuality of its own. In this section, the Bolles Collection is rich in numerous typical pieces.

The space permitted us for this notice is too short to allow a more than passing reference to the very interesting part of the Bolles Collection which may be described as accessory to the collection proper.

There are mirrors, including early and late forms; clocks of various kinds—those that hang, called "bird-cage," others that stand on brackets or on the floor. Among the latter is a fine English marquetry example by James Buckingham, and one formerly in the Lyon's Collection, by Benjamin Boynall of Boston. There are andirons of iron and brass, of the various shapes and kinds (including the "Hessian" and "Smoker") that the skill and fancy of the time produced, besides pewter, iron, glass, and textiles.

Since Mr. Bolles began his collection the interest in our early artistic development in fields other than that of painting has come to be shared by a large number of private collectors; increased local interest has been evidenced by numerous exhibitions of "relics" drawn from high-browed attics on the occasion of local celebrations in New England; and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston has shown us what our early silversmiths could do in an exhibition that broke the ice of official aloofness from such subjects. Deerfield and Salem, Massachusetts, out of the abundance of their local material have brought together their treasures into public exhibition halls, and through the generosity of the late Charles L. Pendleton, the Rhode Island School of Design of Providence has furnished us with a model of what such a collection may be in its exhibit of the finest possible pieces of English and American furniture of the eighteenth century in a house of the period specially designed to hold it. With these exceptions, no activity has as yet been displayed by our public museums in the

conservation and exhibition in a dignified and discriminating manner—such as would be displayed in the treatment of the art of any other country—of the art of our own land. It is to Mrs. Sage's wise liberality that we, in New York, are enabled to save the evidences of our forefathers' appreciation of art before they shall have been scattered beyond recall and to show with becoming respect the work of their hands. H. W. K.



JEANNE D'ARC INITIAL
FROM A FIFTEENTH-CENTURY MANUSCRIPT,
IN THE POSSESSION OF J. REUBELL, ESQ.

NOTE ON THE CASQUE OF JEANNE D'ARC

AS a rule, ancient armor cannot be safely attributed to historical personages, and it is doubtful whether the "Casque of Jeanne d'Arc" which the Museum exhibits has more than a legendary pedigree. Nevertheless, we have received a letter from Mr. Andrew Lang, an authority on the history of Jeanne d'Arc, which bears upon this matter. The letter from St. Andrews, Scotland, is dated November 23d, and reads:

"Mr. Bruce-Gardyne has sent me a photograph of a basinet in your Museum, from Orleans, traditionally attributed to Jeanne

d'Arc. At the siege of Jargeau, in June, 1429, her life was saved by her *chapeline* (a light headpiece without vizor) when a heavy stone knocked her off a scaling ladder. From Jargeau she went to Orleans for two or three days and she might naturally have dedicated the *chapeline*.

(Proce's: Vol. III, pp. 96-97.)

"The coincidence is curious: we do not on any other occasion hear of her wearing a vizorless headpiece."

In this connection we may add what Baron de Cosson has written of this basinet. (*Le Cabinet d'Armes de Maurice de Talleyrand-Perigord*. Paris. Rouveyre, 1901.)

"It is a French basinet dating from the end of the fourteenth or beginning of the fifteenth century. It retains part of the small chain which denotes that this casque has been suspended as an *ex voto* in a church. A heavy dent in the region of the left cheek may well have come from a war-hammer (*bec-de-corbin*), and two others on the right cheek appear to have been the result of lance thrusts. According to information obtained by the Duc de Dino it seems that this basinet formerly hung above the main altar in the church of Saint Pierre du Martroi, at Orleans, where it passed as having belonged to Jeanne d'Arc."

As the case stands we are convinced (1) that the casque is French, (2) that it is of the period of Jeanne d'Arc, and (3) that it bears marks of contemporary service. In the last regard the evidence is satisfactory: for one reason, the injuries clearly antedate the ancient rusting of the headpiece. This then makes it probable that the object was preserved *because* it was an *ex voto*—an assumption still more probable by reason of the fragment of chain which is attached to it—the ancient rivet showing clearly that its attachment to the basinet was primitive. It next remains to be proven that the casque formerly hung above the main altar in the church of Saint Pierre du Martroi, at Orleans, and it would be interesting to confirm the observation which is reported to have been made by the Duc de Dino, that the links of the chain now at-